

\$118,000 to Refurbish Al Anbar Mosques

By Cpl. Joe Niesen
350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL ANBAR, Iraq-The aiding of one's fellow men and women is something that many religions promote as a way of fostering good relations. Keeping this in mind, the 82nd Airborne Division recently began a program designed to refurbish a number of mosques in the Al Anbar province that had fallen into a state of disrepair.

Building upon the Islamic theme of giving, it is the hope of the Coalition that these mosque repairs and enhancements will provide a visible demonstration of positive coalition intentions.

The 82nd began work on the mosques prior to the holy month of Ramadan as a way to show the community its desire to help. Renovating and refurbishing the mosques was one way that the Coalition Forces in the area could make a positive impact during Ramadan.

The work on the mosques is supervised by Imam Kalid Sulliman, Al Anbar Imam Council Chairman and member of the Provincial Council. Imam Sulliman, along with a committee of engineers and other religious leaders, is responsible for ensuring that funds are distributed and that work is completed on the mosques in the area.

The original intent of the project was to have a total of 72 mosques refurbished, according to Maj. Charles C. Heatherly, 82nd Civil Affairs Officer.

However, the number of mosques affected by the program has grown to cover 315 of the 700 in Al Anbar.

"Flexibility was built into the project to allow the executive agent [Sulliman] to create maximum efficiency by addressing the specific needs of each mosque," said Heatherly in a report on the project. He added that

"We want to work towards unity within the Al Anbar region,"
Maj. Charles C. Heatherly

one reason for this was the fact that money was able to be stretched further than originally thought in the region. "For instance, we allocated \$200 to maintenance for the mosques per month. That same amount of money could be used to cover maintenance for over three months."

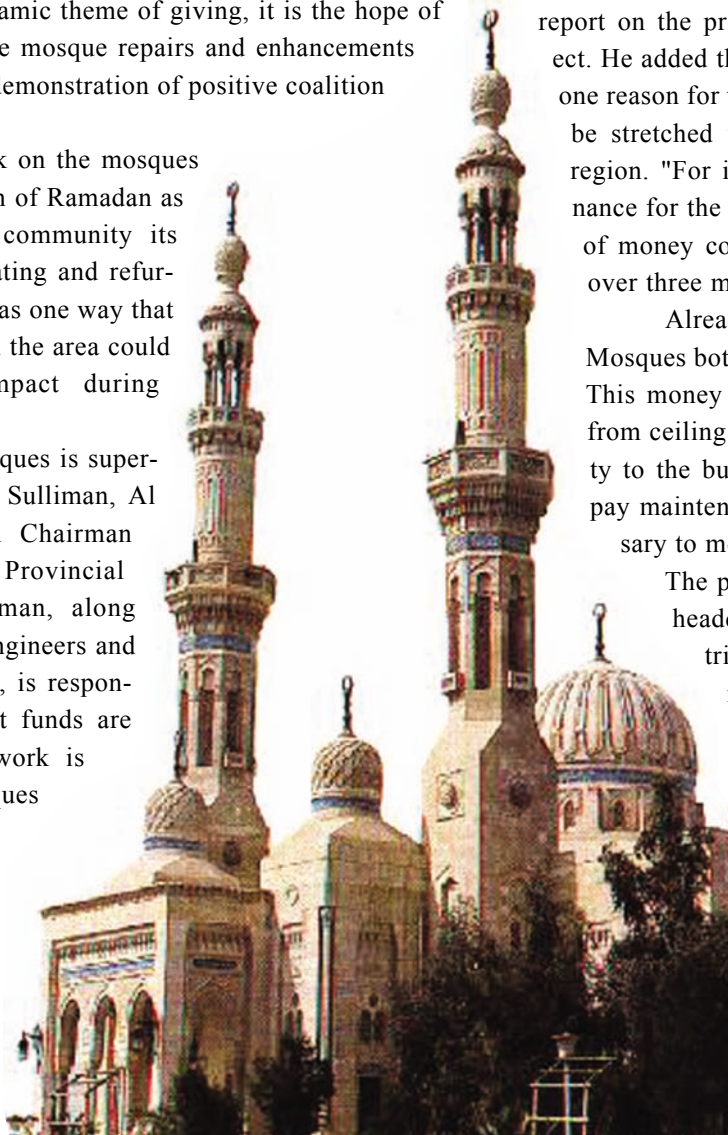
Already, the 82nd has given over \$118,000 to Mosques both in Al Anbar and other nearby regions. This money has been used to purchase everything from ceiling fans and heaters to providing electricity to the buildings. Funds have also been used to pay maintenance staff and other individuals necessary to mosque operation.

The project is being directed by the division headquarters in an effort to transcend the tribal and regional barriers that still separate many Iraqis. The end goal is to have major decisions that affect the entire province made by the Provincial Council, according to Heatherly.

"We want to work towards unity within the Al Anbar region," said Heatherly.

While the offer to inspect the work being done at the mosques has been made to the division, they remain determined not to risk offending those of the Islamic faith by entering the mosques. Instead, all work done within the mosques will be documented with photographs and all monetary transactions will be tracked through written receipts.

"Ultimately, our goal is to get Iraqis helping themselves," said Heatherly.



ON THE COVER - The first Soldiers in line at the new PX began lining up three hours before the scheduled opening. More than 650 Soldiers made purchases on opening day. See story on page 4. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jamie Bender)

By Pfc. J. H. French
82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

Runway Operational Thanks to 618th Engineers

One of the 82nd Airborne Division's specialties is airfield seizures, but what happens when the airfield is damaged beyond usability? That is where the engineers of the 618th Engineer Company, 307 Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division brings their expertise in to play.

Coalition forces took over the airfield at Forward Operation Base Ridgeway and had an airfield left almost, completely unusable from bombing.

According to 1st Lt. Betsy A. Hove, 2nd Platoon Leader with the 618th, the Division did not want to repair the runways for use, but the 618th were adamant about getting it repaired. "We can do it," she said. "Whatever the conditions, we can fix the problem in an expedient manner."

The first thing done was an airfield assessment, Hove continued. The dimensions were measured and a survey team went out and plotted the craters to be repaired. Aerial photographs were also taken to get a better overall sense of the



upcoming job.

To land an aircraft such as a C-130 there must be a minimum of 4,100 feet of operating strip, said Hove.

"In six days we repaired eight craters ranging from 15 to 60 feet in diameter and up to 15 feet deep," noted Hove. We refurbished 9,300 feet of runway on strip number one.

The second runway is still under con-

struction but when complete will be more than 13,000 feet long, Hove continued. The number two runway has 11 craters to be patched but when the final phase is complete, it will include a turn around for planes allowing the airport to sustain continuous traffic.

The first traffic to visit the airfield was helicopters from the 82nd's Aviation Brigade. The 618th went to work as soon as they hit the ground, Hove noted.

The first job to do was clear the taxiways of foreign objects and debris, Hove continued. This allowed the helicopters to land safely. The next step is to control the dust they kick up when taking off and landing.

The next air traffic to visit the airfield was a C-23 Sherpa. According to Hove, the small plane was the first to land at the airfield in more than 15 years.

"The people made it happen out there busting their butts 14 and 16 hours a day," said the 618th first sergeant, Bernard A. Westover, Jr. The support from 890th Combat Heavy Engineer Battalion, a National Guard unit from Mississippi was a huge help. "That kind of teamwork is something you can't practice back home."

The Canopy is published by the 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs Office and the 350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment under the guidance of the Division Commander, Division Public Affairs Officer and editorial staff. *The Canopy* does not represent the opinion of V Corps, US Central Command or the Department of the Army. To contact *The Canopy*, send questions or comments to:

82nd Abn Div PAO
HHC 82nd Abn Div
APO AE 09384

Division Commander

Maj. Gen. Charles H. Swannack, Jr.

Division Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Neil Harper

Staff

Publishing Editors

Capt. Jeffrey Fitzgibbons
Master Sgt. David Johnson

Content Contributors and Editing Staff

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Qualls
Staff Sgt. Craig Pickett
Sgt. Gabe Nix
Sgt. Joe Healy
Sgt. Danny Martin
Cpl. Joe Niesen
Cpl. Vernon O'Donnell
Spc. Justin Carmack
Spc. Michael Carden
Spc. Charles Meseke
Spc. Jamie Bender
Pfc. Johnnie French

More ICDC Graduates Hit the Streets

By Spc. Chuck D. Meseke
82nd Airborne Division PAO

AL ASAD, Iraq- The third class of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps graduated from training at the Navea Training Center, Iraq, Nov 11.

The class of about 170 Iraqis will be tasked with defending much of Iraq's infrastructure facilities, such as power plants and pipelines.

The week long training course requires the Corpsmen to complete physical training each day and train on a variety of skills including first aid, guard duty, recognizing and responding to improvised explosive devices, search techniques and detention of personnel, said 1st Sgt. Jack Cooper, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the training center.

The ICDC graduates are

looking forward to their mission that lies ahead of them.

"I joined the ICDC to give security to our country, our cities and our families, by ourselves and for ourselves," said Mohamed Fala'ah, a guard.

Fala'ah also expressed that other Iraqis were confident in the new civil defense corps.

"My family is very proud that I am in the ICDC. With this training, I can do good things for my community," Fala'ah said.

Although the course was only a week long, the U.S. soldiers who trained the ICDC feel that they are ready to help Coalition forces.

"The majority of Iraqis learn well and the ones that didn't were helped along by the ones who were quick," said Staff Sgt. Michael Deatherage, of Sweet Springs Mo., a drill instructor at the Navea Training Center with 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment.

"Our goal is to train three battalions worth of ICDC," said Cooper.

Once those forces have gained experience from working with U.S. soldiers who now providing security for Iraq's infrastructure, the ICDC will be ready to operate independently and be effective, explained Cooper.

U.S. troops hope that the ICDC will one day be able to function free of Coalition support and provide security for Iraq. This will keep with the theme that Iraqis will be the people to write a new chapter in their country's history, one of peace and prosperity.

New Soldiers for a New Iraqi Army

By Cpl. Joe Niesen
350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AR RAMADI, Iraq—Most soldiers remember the pain of processing into the Army. Soldiers recollect long lines, grueling physical and mental tests, and the nagging dread of being disqualified for some reason. Many Iraqi citizens are now going through this same process as Coalition forces begin recruiting personnel for the new Iraqi army.

A make-shift processing center has been established for Al Anbar in a small room of the governor's building in Ar Ramadi. Here, hundreds of recruits gather, hoping to be considered for enlistment. Many are going through the process for the first time, but others are looking to reclaim their former jobs.



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Joe Niesen

Maj. David Menagon discusses rank structure with one of the new recruits in the Iraqi Army.

So far, they have recruited and processed 1,150 officers and 400 enlisted personnel, according to Maj. David Menagon, 304th Civil Affairs Brigade. It has been his job since his arrival in October to establish a veterans affairs program for the Al Anbar province. While some of the recruits are prior enlisted, Menagon is quick to point out that they all will have to start from scratch when it comes to the training.

The men seeking to enlist come from all walks of life; some are looking to defend their newly freed country, while others are simply looking for work to support their families. Their ages range from 18 to 25 for the lower ranking enlisted, and 25 to 40 for the officers. Still, the room that serves as the processing center for the region is packed with men of all ages.

"Everyone goes through me," said Menagon.

Before anyone is admitted from the office, Menagon personally screens them with the aid of a translator. His goal is to ensure that each candidate is aware of what he is getting into and that he will complete the training. He also screens their backgrounds to ensure that members of the former regime are prevented from entering.

Menagon also added that while it is hoped that every candidate is able to read and write, he understands this might not be possible. Thus, he is working to ensure those candidates who may need more than simply basic military training can receive it along with their other studies.

The pay scale for the new army begins at \$60 per month. While the emphasis is currently on hiring new recruits to the army, the 304th is also looking for qualified officers and noncommissioned officers to aid in the training of the force.

As funding becomes available, it is the hope that the processing center can relocate to a more suitable location. However, for the time being, the cramped room on the first floor of the government building will continue to serve as both recruitment office and processing center for Iraq's new volunteer army.

Thanksgiving Day to Bring Food, Surprises

By Sgt. Gabe Nix
350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AR RAMADI, Iraq - A turkey gobbles in the fields of Ellettsville, Indiana, an area known for its contribution to the Thanksgiving holiday. A turkey translator interprets the gobble. "I wish to be part of the All-American Thanksgiving this year in Iraq." Excitement for this year's Thanksgiving feast is not limited to the turkeys in the field.

"This year's All-American Thanksgiving will be a festive atmosphere," says food service supervisor Master Sgt. Mack E. Sumler, "as well as a tribute to the 82nd

Airborne and all of the soldiers who are serving here."

The festive soiree features a Thanksgiving lineup that promises to bring the most disciplined paratrooper *All the Way* back for seconds. Included in the feast are Thanksgiving staples such as turkey, ham, stuffing, glazed sweet potatoes, shrimp cocktail, and an assortment of deserts and drinks.

Kellogg, Brown and Root food service technician, Melvin Young, an army retiree, is making the necessary preparations required to feed an army. He is planning on going through 4,000 pounds of turkey, 3,000 pounds of shrimp, and 4,000

hams. Young also said KBR is working hand-in-hand with army food service workers to make the event a success.

As soon as the supplies arrive, army cooks will be helping to put the finishing touches on the All American Thanksgiving by putting up decorations, setting up tables, assisting the chefs and using their culinary skills to erect sculptures out of chocolate and ice.

The Thanksgiving Day dinner will be available for all soldiers working in the 82nd Airborne area of operations.

Sumler hopes the extra surprises

Continued to Page 5

Junction City PX Opens to Stellar Crowd

By Spc. Jamie Bender
1st Infantry Division Public Affairs

Ar Ramadi, Iraq—Soldiers lined up three hours early to make their purchases at the new Post Exchange grand opening Nov. 8.

First Brigade Combat Team commander, Col. Buck Connor and Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Riling, 1st BCT command sergeant major, were on hand to cut the ribbon to officially open the PX. Instead of cutting the ribbon themselves, they passed the honor to Bob Hunt, Army and Air Force Exchange Service team leader.

Prior to the ribbon cutting, Connor spoke about the history of the PX system.

"For the past 100 years, beginning with the first world war, the PX system has always been there in peace and in war but especially in combat zones," Connor said. "Once we merged with the Air Force in 1950, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service has been there. They were there in Korea; they were there in Vietnam; they were there in Desert Storm, and they are here now."

"The greatest thing that Mr. Bob Hunt and his volunteers bring to us is a piece of home," continued Connor. "When you go inside there, you will see the same things you see in PX's in America. What a great joy that is to bring us some normalcy. We can't thank you enough. On behalf of all the soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team and the Big Red One thank you and all of your staff for coming to be with us."

The renovation of the building housing the PX was done by the 248th Engineer Company, a National Guard unit. The engineers tore down walls inside of an existing structure and built display stands and wall fixtures.

The merchandise sold at the PX comes from several sources and is distributed through a system at Baghdad International Airport.

"We should be getting more merchandise every two weeks from BIAP," said Hunt. "We get our magazines, books and movies from Atlanta. We also get stereo equipment from Germany."

Getting merchandise here that the soldiers want can be a difficult task and can cause additional problems.

"It took us almost two weeks to get this stuff from BIAP because they were having trouble with local nationals not wanting to drive the trucks," said Hunt. "That can cause soldiers to want to buy

everything now while we have it because they are afraid we won't get more."

To prevent shortages, some items in the PX have been limited to one per purchase.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jamie Bender

Col. Buck Connor makes the first purchase of a Guns and Ammo magazine at the new PX at Camp Junction City.

"We suggested that coffee and tobacco products be limited to one per soldier," Hunt said. "We are low on that kind of stuff, we don't want soldiers to buy it all at once because we are going to be here. It's not like we are leaving next week or something. Just give us time and we will get what you need."

Hunt said they plan to hire 10 workers to help man the PX. All employees will be screened through a contractor and will be living in housing on the camp.

The soldiers of Camp Junction City have looked forward to the PX's opening

and many felt that it added to their morale.

"It gave everyone something to look forward to," said Sgt. Dave Renjifo, 1st Engineer Battalion. "It makes me feel like the Army is working for me."

For some soldiers, the amount and variety of merchandise was more than they anticipated.

"It was better than I expected," said Sgt. Patrick Leon, 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion. "It had a lot of stock and a good variety. They had everything from electronics to snacks to sundry items."

The first day of business for the new PX served about 700 soldiers, almost half the population who reside at Camp Junction City. With an average transaction of \$95, those soldiers spent over \$66,000 at their new PX.

Question of the Week



To the nearest 10, on average, how many sesame seeds are on a McDonald's bun?

Last Week's Answer:

The longest river in western Asia is the 1,700 mile Euphrates. It begins in the high mountains of eastern Turkey, crosses eastern Syria and flows southeastward through the length of Iraq.

Learning the Language of the Locals

By Sgt. Joe Healy

82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

AR RAMADI, Iraq - "Repeat after me," said 1st Lt. Mikal Shabazz, a reservist with the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade. "As-saleem alaikam. Again, as-saleem alaikam. One more time, but speak a little slower and enunciate; As-saleem alaikam. Good."

The Arabic phrase translated in English literally means: May (God's) peace be upon you, according to Shabazz. The soldiers repeating Shabazz's words are learning Arabic in one of the night-

class held November 8. The class met for the 11th session.

"The course work challenges your mind," said Sgt. Shaikh Ali, a soldier with the 313th Military Intelligence Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division. "We've got some great students here and they are very diligent about their work. That's why they show up here after working all day long."

The course is open to all soldiers. Ali said on some evenings, privates study next to lieutenant colonels.

According to Shabazz, the course teaches its students greetings, the alphabet and common expressions.

Shabazz said his teaching style emphasizes transliteration - using English characters to describe Arabic sounds. He wants his students to use all their senses in the learning process. Everybody has different learning styles and Shabazz attempts to incorporate all styles into his class.

"My students will write Arabic, see Arabic, speak Arabic and hear Arabic and hopefully, remember Arabic," said Shabazz. "It's a very old language with many sounds unique to itself."

Shabazz said he learned Arabic by listening to tapes, reading books and asking his tutors a lot of questions in his hometown, Philadelphia. He thought learning all the characters and their four forms was challenging. Many students get confused because in the English language, adjectives precede nouns, whereas in Arabic the opposite is true.

The course meets three times per week. Usually, one lesson is studied per week, but sometimes the students learn quickly and two lessons are covered, said Shabazz. He said he'll teach the course until he redeploys.

Shabazz noted that class camaraderie is good and the soldiers get a chance to be in a relaxed learning environment.

When asked how he likes teaching Arabic in a Middle Eastern country, Shabazz responded, "I think this experience will be memorable. It's more meaningful than teaching back home in Philadelphia."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joe Healy

1st Lt. Mikal Shabazz, a soldier with the 304th Civil Affairs Battalion, points out key words in his Arabic class which is held three times a week.

ly classes he teaches. Located at the Division Chapel, the course is open to all soldiers at Champion Base.

In a small, simple room, Arabic words and phrases are scratched in thick blue marker ink on over-sized poster paper. Five soldiers studied the script and imitated their teacher during the evening

Thanksgiving... Continued from Page 3

planned, as well as the extra effort being put forth by the army cooks, will allow soldiers time to forget about their current situation for a short while.

"You take a moment, five minutes, an hour, a day, to realize what you are thankful for, make the soldiers feel like they are back home, and be thankful for what they have," said Sumler.

The atmosphere will be augmented by more than the mouth-watering chow. "Everyone will be impressed

by what we have done," commented Sumler. "The goal is to take care of the soldiers. A lot of planning has gone into this, and the chain of command has given us all of their support."

Being away from home during the holidays is often part of military life, but Sumler hopes that this year's All American Thanksgiving will give everyone a morale boost and give them motivation to finish the deployment strong.

A worker with Doud and Partners helps move boxes full of food inside the chow hall in preparation for coming meals. Workers are already gearing up for the Thanksgiving Day feast.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gabe Nix

The Back Page...

Abizaid: 'Despicable Thugs' Cannot Win in Iraq

WASHINGTON - The terrorists trying to undermine coalition efforts in Iraq are a "despicable bunch of thugs," but no military threat exists in Iraq that can drive the United States out, the commander of U.S. Central Command said today.

"The enemy will stop at nothing to create the impression that we can't win," Army Gen. John Abizaid said. "They put ammunition and explosives in ambulances. They store ammunition and explosives in schools and mosques. The same things that you saw from this enemy during the march to Baghdad, you see from this enemy now."

"They're a despicable bunch of thugs that will be defeated," he continued. "There is

absolutely no doubt in my mind that with patience, perseverance and courage, we will see this thing through."

Speaking in Tampa, Fla., to reporters at the command's MacDill Air Force Base headquarters and to the Pentagon press corps here via video teleconference, Abizaid said he had just returned from a visit to Iraq. There he met with every division commander, almost all brigade commanders and many battalion commanders, as well as with many of the lieutenants and captains involved in the fighting.

"Every single one of them tells me they're winning," Abizaid said. "They are winning - they're confident, they're capable, they know what they're doing. They are fighting a low-intensity conflict in some of the finest traditions of the armed forces of the

United States."

The general said the effort is succeeding because the troops know how to take a balanced approach to their mission.

"They conduct very robust offensive operations when they need to. On the other hand, they know how to be compassionate with the people," Abizaid said. "They know the local situation in a way that I've never seen troops involved in an operation like this understand before."

Abizaid noted that most of the resistance the coalition is facing is confined to an isolated geographic area, primarily in Ar Ramadi, Baghdad and Tikrit. "And we have put a large number of U.S. forces in those areas to deal with the enemy," he said.

U.S. Forces Wield 'Iron Hammer' to Nail Insurgents

WASHINGTON - A series of coordinated strikes dubbed "Operation Iron Hammer" kicked off Nov. 12 with U.S. forces striking back at anti-coalition insurgents in Iraq.

A U.S. Central Command news release today said Iron Hammer is a joint operation to target enemy operating areas, deny the enemy the opportunity to stage weapons for use against coalition forces and the citizens of Baghdad, and destroy enemy forces conducting mortar attacks against Baghdad.

The first salvo came when 1st Armored Division soldiers saw mortar rounds being fired from a van and gave chase, noting stops it made. An AH-64 Apache helicopter followed the van out of the village and attacked it, killing two suspected insurgents and wounding three others. Five others were captured. Soldiers found an 82 mm mortar launch tube at one of the van's stops, and are searching the others, CENTCOM officials said.

About a half hour later, near Sadia, an AC-130 Spectre gunship and about a dozen Bradley fighting vehicles destroyed a warehouse insurgents had been using as a headquarters for some

strikes against coalition forces. A Defense Department-issued statement said the warehouse was "a known meeting, planning, storage and rendezvous point for belligerent elements currently conducting attacks on coalition forces and infrastructure."

Other ongoing operations continue to target insurgents and uncover weapons caches. Soldiers of Task Force All American - composed of members of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Brigade Combat Team, and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment - conducted 167 patrols in a 24-hour period Nov. 11-12. The force detained 25 people and confiscated weapons and explosives, including six surface-to-air missiles.

Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment put down a Nov. 11 attack against the Jordanian Hospital and Forward Operating Base Volturno in Fallujah. Responding to automatic-weapons fire from a vehicle near the hospital, soldiers returned fire, preventing the fleeing attackers from getting into another vehicle.

The paratroopers fired warning shots when a third vehicle approached at high speed. When the vehicle didn't slow down, the soldiers shot and killed the two occupants, and then returned fire when attacked from another car. In all, the soldiers killed six attackers and wounded four. None of the soldiers was hurt.

AL ANBAR trucking initiative creates jobs

AR RAMADI, Iraq - Task Force All American has created a new program known as the Al Anbar Trucking Initiative that will allow local nationals to take over convoy supply missions in the area. More specifically, it will employ local truck drivers to carry supplies to Coalition Forces while reducing the exposure of U.S. soldiers to attacks.

The program is divided into four phases that begins with a limited number of local drivers with full U.S. protection and will lead to a locally run and protected operation. The goal is to employ up to 800 drivers by the final phase and to turn over full security responsibility to the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC).

The benefits of the Trucking Initiative are vast. It will reduce the number of U.S. forces that could be exposed to attack. The plan will promote local economy growth

with the hiring of drivers as well as locally provided maintenance and dispatching. The drivers will receive fair compensation for their services and be better able to provide for their families. Lastly, the program will increase the legitimacy of the ICDC in public eyes by giving them a higher level of responsibility.

Task Force All American continues to work with the people of Iraq to usher in a new era of prosperity and economic growth while ensuring the security and safety of the region.